

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill modifies the health professional education loan forgiveness program, modifies nursing facility employee scholarship costs, modifies nursing facility external fixed costs, and appropriates money for a long-term care grant program, a long-term care study, and the nurse loan forgiveness program.

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- 1 **Definitions.** Amends § 144.1501, subd. 1. Adds a definition of “dental therapist.”
- 2 **Creation of account.** Amends § 144.1501, subd. 2. Allows dental therapists agreeing to practice in a Minnesota nursing home or intermediate care facility for person with a developmental disability to participate in the loan forgiveness program.
- 3 **Eligibility.** Amends § 144.1501, subd. 3. Allows the commissioner of health to consider applications for the health professional education loan forgiveness program from nursing program graduates who are registered nurses or licensed practical nurses. Limits the agreement to serve a nurse needs to make to a minimum of two years full-time service, as opposed to three years for other applicants.
- 4 **Home and community-based services employee scholarship program.** Creates § 144.1503.

Subd. 1. Creation. Establishes the home and community-based services employee scholarship grant program to assist qualified provider applicants in providing employee scholarships for education in nursing and other health care fields.

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Subd. 2. Provision of grants. Requires the commissioner to make grants available to qualified providers of older adult services. Specifies how grants must be used.

Subd. 3. Eligibility. Specifies provider eligibility requirements and limitations on the use of grant funds.

Subd. 4. Home and community-based services employee scholarship program. Requires qualifying providers to have an established home and community-based services employee scholarship program. Allows providers to establish criteria by which funds are distributed among employees. Specifies minimum requirements scholarship programs must meet.

Subd. 5. Participating providers. Requires the commissioner to publish a request for proposals in the State Register by August 15, 2015, and lists the information that must be included in the request. Requires the commissioner to publish additional requests for proposals by August 15 of each year in which funding is appropriated for this purpose.

Subd. 6. Reporting requirements. Specifies provider reporting requirements. Requires providers to repay all of the funds awarded under this program if reporting requirements are not met.

- 5 **Employee scholarship costs and training in English as a second language.** Amends § 256B.431, subd. 36. Modifies nursing facility employee scholarship costs for the period between July 1, 2015, and June 30, 2017. Reduces the average number of hours worked per week necessary to qualify, expands eligible professions, and includes additional eligible costs. Specifies that this rate increase is an optional rate add-on that a facility must request from the commissioner and that the rate increase must be used for scholarships.
- 6 **External fixed costs.** Amends § 256B.441, subd. 13. Modifies the definition of “external fixed costs” under the nursing facility reimbursement system to include nursing assistant training and career ladder rate adjustments.
- 7 **Calculation of payment rate for external fixed costs.** Amends § 256B.441, subd. 53. Makes conforming changes to the external fixed costs payment rate calculation.
- 8 **Career ladder rate adjustment.** Amends § 256B.441, by adding subd. 65. Paragraph (a) requires the commissioner to make available rate adjustments for nursing facilities to implement career ladder wage increases for participants in leadership or apprenticeship programs. Adds the rate adjustments to the external fixed portion of nursing facility rates. Specifies how the rate adjustment must be used.

Paragraph (b) requires nursing facilities to apply to the commissioner in order to receive the career ladder rate adjustment.

Paragraph (c) lists the information that must be included on the application. Specifies the manner in which maximum rate increases must be computed.

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Paragraph (d) requires the commissioner to allocate appropriations on a pro rata basis to the applying facilities by reducing the rate adjustment determined for each facility by an equal percentage if the costs for all proposals exceed the appropriation.

Paragraph (e) requires participating facilities to submit to the commissioner a report after the end of the rate year to determine the amount actually spent on wage increases. Allows the commissioner to recoup funds from facilities under certain circumstances. Requires the commissioner to adjust the rate adjustment to reflect the actual cost of wage increases if the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost.

- 9 Appropriation; Long-Term Care Grant Program.** Paragraph (a) appropriates an unspecified amount in fiscal year 2016 from the general fund to the commissioner of employment and economic development to further the advancement of long-term care careers. Allows long-term care employers, Minnesota postsecondary education institutions, and adult training programs to apply to receive grants for specified purposes including hiring incentives, leadership training for staff, providing mentorship models, and supporting health care education programming.

Paragraph (b) specifies the application process.

Paragraph (c) requires the commissioner to publish the grant notice twice per year and make grants available on October 1 and March 1 of each year the grant program is funded.

- 10 Appropriation; Long-Term Care Study.** Appropriates an unspecified amount in fiscal year 2016 from the general fund to the commissioner of employment and economic development to study ways in which tax credits or hiring incentives can benefit long-term care employers to recruit, retain, and provide career ladders to employees in the long-term care field. Requires the commissioner to report recommendations to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over employment and economic development, health, and human services policy and finance by February 1, 2016.
- 11 Appropriation; Workforce Centers.** Appropriates an unspecified amount in fiscal year 2016 from the general fund to the commissioner of employment and economic development for purposes of enhancing or establishing new programs within Minnesota Workforce Centers to address the shortage of paid caregivers in senior care settings in Minnesota. Lists the programs that may be enhanced or established.
- 12 Appropriation; Nurse Loan Forgiveness Program.** Appropriates \$260,000 in fiscal year 2016 from the general fund to the commissioner of health for the nurse loan forgiveness program. Specifies this appropriation is in addition to any previous appropriation for this purpose and is added to the program's base.
- 13 Appropriation; home and community-based services employee scholarship program.** Appropriates an unspecified amount in fiscal year 2016 from the general fund to the commissioner of health for the home and community-based services employee scholarship program.
- 14 Appropriation; career ladder rate adjustment.** Appropriates unspecified amounts in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 from the general fund to the commissioner of human services to cover

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the state share of providing career ladder program rate adjustments. Adds this appropriation to the base.